



New Canaan
Land Trust

2022 Annual Impact Report



A Promise for People, for Nature. Forever.

Refocusing on Land Conservation

President's Letter

As we reflect on the past fiscal year, we are so proud of the support that you, our members, have given to help us achieve our mission. Founded 55 years ago, the Land Trust has evolved over the years. Protecting open space in New Canaan has always been the heart of our organization.

In 2019, we expanded our mission to include connecting the New Canaan community with its natural resources. In an era where we all need to take a role in safeguarding the planet's future, the Land Trust wants to engage neighbors in our natural surroundings, and by doing so, instill a conservation ethic among all.

Results show how much you, and the community at large, have engaged with the Land Trust over the past year. The number of supporting members exceeds 500 families...Many of you attended the 50-plus events that we hosted on our preserves...Dozens and dozens of volunteers helped us prepare for the staging of the second Sculpture Trail...and many youth groups volunteered their time to help steward our properties.

With an increasingly involved community, we now believe that it is important to refocus on conserving high-priority open space. Our Strategic Conservation Plan 2020-2040 sets a goal of protecting

450 acres by 2025 from the current 392, and a total of 800 acres by 2040.

It has been over five years since the Land Trust made a major purchase of a property. That acquisition was the 6.7-acre Silvermine-Fowler parcel adjacent to the Land Trust's 41-acre Hicks Meadows-Kelley Uplands Audubon Sanctuary. The resulting property, Still Pond Preserve, is one of the largest tracts of open space in New Canaan.

This year, it is our goal to make a like-sized land acquisition. The addition of open space, especially to contiguous Land Trust properties, fulfills our conservation priorities. The newly acquired land will protect wildlife habitat, safeguard our drinking water, mitigate climate change, and prevent overdevelopment. We expect to have more to report on some future conservation soon. And we know that working with our new Executive Director John Winter who brings deep experience in protecting open space will facilitate our acquisition efforts. (Welcome John!) And stay tuned...

In the meantime, thank you for your continued support in protecting the special places in New Canaan.

- **Tom Cronin**, President of the Board



John Winter, our new Executive Director.
Photo by Beth Sanford

To those of you whom I have met, thank you for the warm welcome. To those I haven't, let me introduce myself. My name is John Winter, and I am the new Executive Director of the New Canaan Land Trust. I started in late June, just in time for firefly season (the Firefly Sanctuary is great!).

Working for NCLT is a bit of a homecoming for me since I grew up not far away in Trumbull. My parents still live in the Bridgeport area, and getting to see them in their golden years is part of the reason I applied for the ED position here in New Canaan. I am grateful to have found a position where I can do the conservation

A Message from the Executive Director

work I love and be near family at the same time. Speaking of family, I am married and have a 22-year-old daughter. We also have a cat and a cockatiel.

I come to NCLT with several decades of experience working for environmental organizations and more than 15 years leading land trusts. My most recent position was as the Executive Director of the Rensselaer Land Trust in Troy, New York.

Here in New Canaan, I will continue the core activities of the Land Trust – property stewardship, getting people outdoors, offering nature education events, and engaging the community in our mission. Consistent with that mission – and a priority of the Board – is to acquire and protect more land in New Canaan. The Land Trust has an excellent long-term land protection plan. I look forward to working with landowners, partner organizations, public officials, and all of you to set aside more land for permanent protection. At a time when climate change has become ever more concerning, and wildlife habitat is shrinking, the work of the Land Trust (55 years young in 2022) has never been more vital.

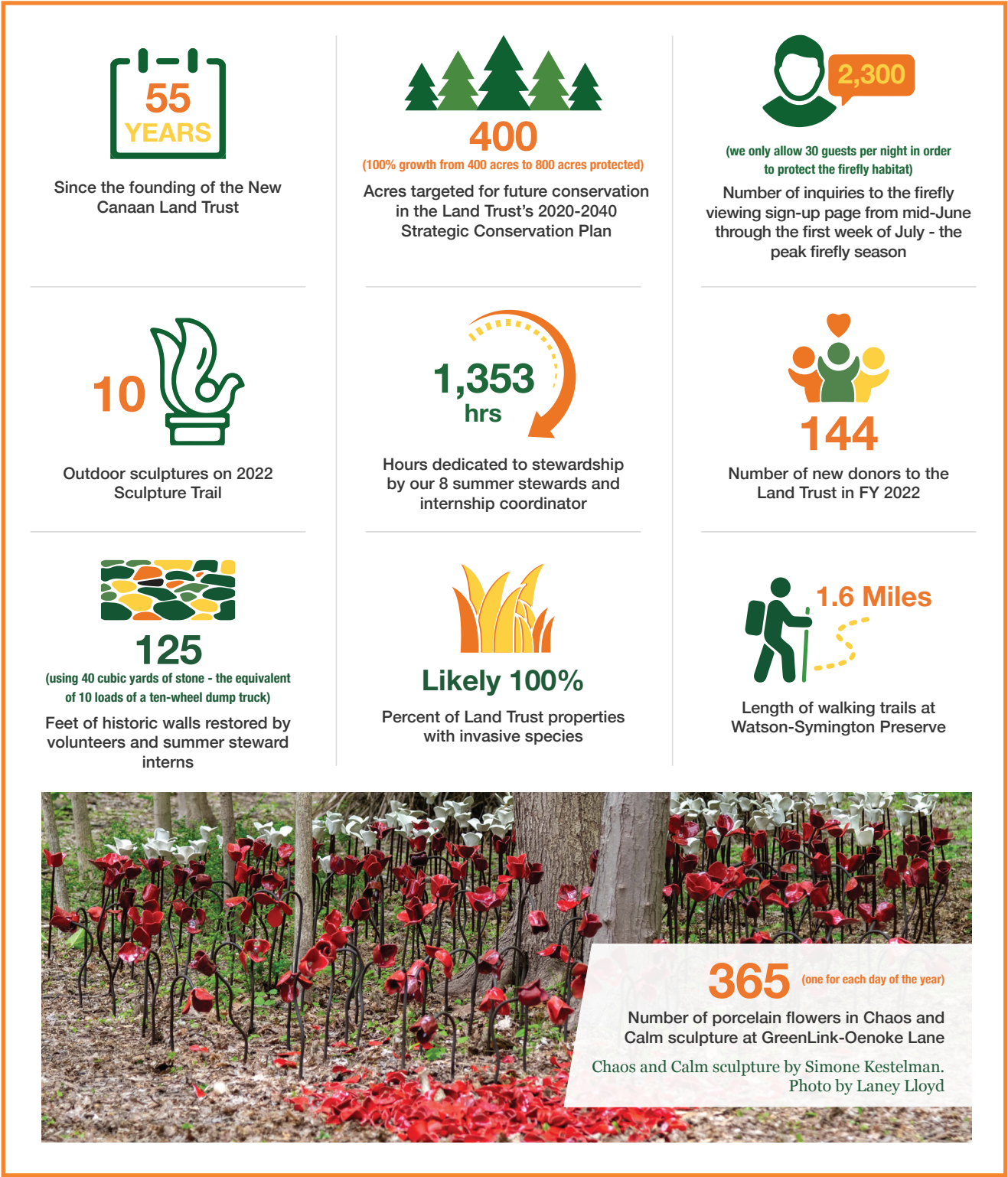
Thank you for your continued support of the Land Trust. I look forward to working with you as my time here in New Canaan begins. Please say hello if you see me out on the trails at one of our lovely nature preserves or in town. I'll enjoy meeting you.

- **John Winter**, Executive Director

Advancing the Mission

The mission of the New Canaan Land Trust is to foster a connection between the New Canaan community and its natural resources through the conservation and sustainable stewardship of our open space. Everything we do at the Land Trust is done in pursuit of this mission. Below are just a few of the milestones (and a fun fact or two!) that your support helped us accomplish. In the following pages, we describe some of the many ways that your land trust has created positive change in our community.

Creating a Lasting Impact



The Simple Joy of Fireflies

The Firefly Sanctuary is a unique open space preserve made possible by neighbors and friends who pooled resources to buy and donate the land to the NCLT. The abundant population of fireflies living in the meadow is due to the efforts of one man, Bill McDonald.

A lifelong nature lover, Bill delights in creating natural habitats for butterflies, bees, birds, and especially fireflies. He lives next door to our preserve and has devoted fifty years to cultivating wildflower meadows around his home. Early on, he began raising firefly larvae and estimates he grows one million of them a year!

Bill explains that fireflies are beetles, and like all insects, go through a multi-phased life cycle. Fireflies spend the majority of their life

(one to two years) living underground as larvae preying on other insects. “They particularly like snails and snails like asters, so I grow many kinds of asters to attract snails to feed the firefly larva.”

Fireflies pupate in early June and turn into the adults we see lighting up the summer sky. The females flash low in the meadow while the males signal from the nearby trees. The flashing sequences are courtship rituals, and each species has its own pattern.

Fireflies are abundant on Bill’s land and especially in our adjacent preserve. When asked what makes our sanctuary so unique, Bill replied, “It’s a natural oasis in a suburban neighborhood. It meets the requirements the adults need to display. It’s a small space

On a hot and sultry evening, a young family makes their way up the woodland path to the meadow at the top of the hill. As darkness falls, the children call out, “Look, I see one in the grass, and there’s another in the tree, and there’s another and another....” They continue their exclamations until the entire meadow twinkles with thousands of lights to the delight of all who have come to witness the simple joy of fireflies.



By Popular Demand

Due to increasing popularity, the number of visitors is limited during peak viewing evenings in late June and early July each year. Advanced registration is offered on our website at www.newcanaanlandtrust.org. At all other times, the sanctuary is open to the public from dawn to dusk. The entrance is located on Sleepy Hollow Road.

Firefly Sanctuary. Photo by Ed Catlett



with low plants surrounded by tall deciduous and evergreen trees, and there is minimal light pollution.” Darkness is essential for fireflies to carry out their courtship. He added, “Spotlights around houses interfere with firefly signaling and are death to pollinating moths and other night-flying insects.”

The other side of caring for fireflies is to preserve their habitat 365 days a year. While we don’t see the larva living underground, we follow Bill’s lead to protect their nursery. That means no pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers and minimal soil disturbance. We mow the meadow once a year after a hard frost to ensure the insect life has gone to bed for the winter. With Bill’s efforts and our own, we are well rewarded come early summer when the sky lights up with the fireflies’ amazing bioluminescence.

Why does Bill raise fireflies?

“People ask me that question all the time,” he responds. “Children know the answer right away. It is happiness.” —Bill McDonald



Bill McDonald among the pollinator plants in his yard across from the Firefly Sanctuary. Photo by Susan Bergen



Firefly Sanctuary by day.



Welcoming Our Summer Stewardship Interns

Once the Land Trust conserves a property, we maintain it for generations to come. Known as stewardship, we have been fortunate to find young people interested in helping us with this critical task.

Since 2014, the Land Trust has welcomed high school students from New Canaan to its Summer Steward Internship Program. Designed to provide a meaningful experience in nature to young people, the program introduces interns to the multi-faceted fields of land conservation and property stewardship. In addition to completing meaningful projects that benefit the environment and the New Canaan community, interns meet with professionals in the environmental field, enjoy trips to local conservation areas, and participate in field-based learning.

Interns can choose from two four-week sessions each summer. They spend four days each week working on the Land Trust's 400-acre network of open space. On the 5th day, they enjoy an out-of-town field trip. Interns receive a stipend for working with us.

In FY22, we hosted eight summer interns. Their projects included building raised walkways at Colhoun Preserve; adding more raised walkways at Still Pond, Watson-Symington, and on the GreenLink-Oenoke Lane Trail; restoring a section of the stone wall at Hawkins Preserve; and removing burning bush at Browne and Still Pond Preserves, among other projects that helped the Land Trust care for its preserves. Erin Feeney served as the summer steward intern manager and was assisted by summer steward Mike Pazareskis. Both did an excellent job, and we are grateful for their help with our land stewardship.

We will begin accepting applications for the summer 2023 steward internship program in the spring and invite local high school students to apply.

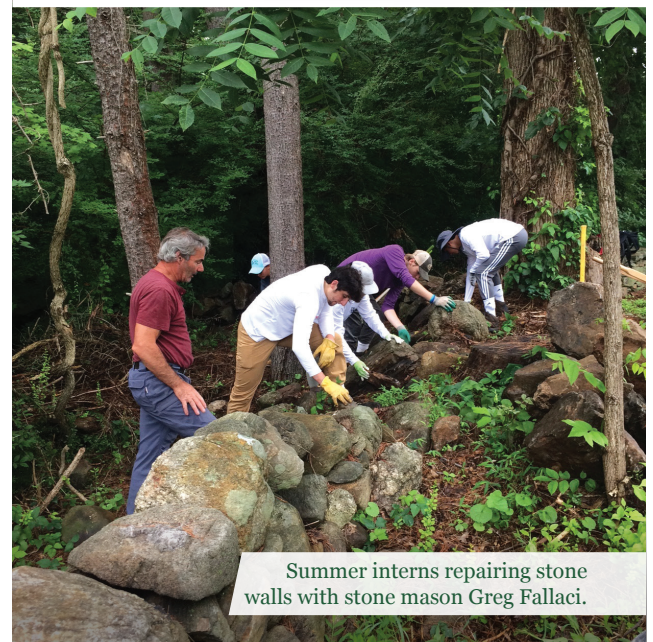
Here's some photos of the interns at work...

Thank You to our Internship Program Supporters

We are grateful to the Jeniam Foundation and the Newcomers Club of New Canaan for their support of the FY22 summer steward internship program.



Summer interns digging water bars .



Summer interns repairing stone walls with stone mason Greg Fallaci.



Summer interns building raised walkways .

Inspiring the Next Generation of Conservationists - Hosting the NCHS Green League



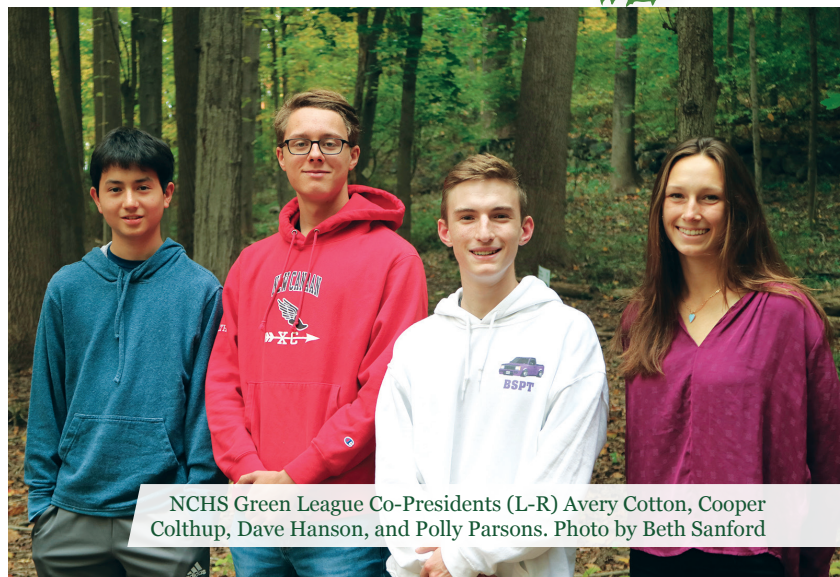
As the 2021-2022 school year began at New Canaan High School, a group of students envisioned spending time in nature to learn about the environment and perform community service. Four students took charge. Avery Cotton, Polly Parsons, Dave Hanson, and Cooper Colthup mobilized to create a new club. Their vision was to create enjoyable outdoor educational experiences, team build, and help local environmental organizations – with a focus on the Land Trust.

Along with Science Teacher Clare McLellan, the four students recruited members at the annual high school club fair in September to join the new club. They choose to name it the “Green League”. More than twenty students signed up. The organizers, now co-presidents of the newly established Green League, set out to build a regular schedule to visit and work on Land Trust properties.

The co-presidents became interested in the Land Trust in different ways. As a son of Land Trust board member Newell Cotton, a Land Trust 2021 summer steward, and avid birder, Avery had spent many hours on our preserves. Polly, a stand-out on the NCHS field hockey team, became passionate about the Land Trust after running on its trails during the pandemic lockdown. Last, Dave’s Boy Scout experience working on the Firefly Sanctuary and Cooper’s Land Trust summer internship gave them the know-how and inspiration to join forces with Avery and Polly.

“Forming a club was a leadership opportunity, but it was also fun to find out about others who are passionate about what I am passionate about.”
— Polly Parsons, New Canaan High School Green League member

Working with then-NCLT Executive Director Aaron Lefland, the co-presidents organized a series of outdoor experiences for the club. The focus was on activities that could be enjoyed without prior land stewardship experience, could be completed over the several hours the club had available for an outing, required team building, and filled a stewardship need of the Land Trust. Projects included preserving New Canaan’s stone wall heritage by assisting in stone wall repairs at Hawkins Preserve on North Wilton Road, clearing obstructions from walking trails at several preserves, and removing invasive plants from the preserves. Green League members also got a chance to hike our trails. They visited every publicly accessible preserve, often accompanied by a Land Trust board member who described the history and key features of each property. The educational component included presentations on NCLT’s history, pollinator gardening, and climate change.

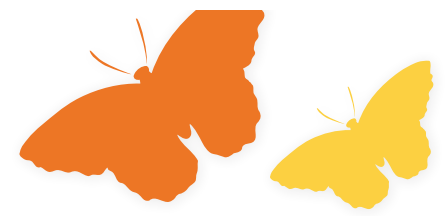


NCHS Green League Co-Presidents (L-R) Avery Cotton, Cooper Colthup, Dave Hanson, and Polly Parsons. Photo by Beth Sanford

For the Fall semester of 2022, the Green League wants to grow its membership, finalize the website it started last semester – and especially, to continue working with the Land Trust. To learn more about the Green League (or to join them if you’re a NCHS student), email them at ncgreenleague@gmail.com



New Canaan High School Green League students repairing a stone wall at Hawkins Preserve with stone mason Greg Fallaci.



Engaging Our Youth

2022 marks the 55th anniversary of the founding of the Land Trust. As with any anniversary, we look back at all that's been done with the help of so many committed supporters, volunteers, board members, and staff – and give our heartfelt thanks. We also look ahead. One of our objectives at NCLT is to inspire people to appreciate nature and participate in protecting it. This is especially the case in our work with young people. We hope to encourage them to continue our efforts and become the next generation of conservationists.

NCLT offers several ways for youth to engage with us, including an internship program for seniors at New Canaan High School, collaboration with the NCHS's Green League, the Service League of Boys (better known by its fun acronym "SLOBs"), and through Eagle Scout projects. We also offer a summer steward internship program.

Internship Program for Seniors at New Canaan High School

Seniors from New Canaan High School are selected each year for a 4-week internship in the late spring. Students volunteer for 25 hours per week in lieu of class time. The interns for this year were Philip Ettinger and Brendon Tiscornia. Their activities included site preparation and installation of the outdoor sculptures at our nature preserves for the 2022 Sculpture Trail; work on our nature trails, including lining trails, building raised walkways, cleaning out water bars, collecting litter, removing invasive plants, and sharing information about their work through our blogs and social media. Philip also created an excellent video about the Sculpture Trail that includes artist interviews, time-lapse video, drone shots, and masterful post-production. You can view it on our website.



Philip Ettinger and Brendon Tiscornia help artist Jon BonSignore install Kawa I & II on Hannan Field. Photo by Laney Lloyd



New Canaan High School student volunteer removing invasive vines at Firefly Preserve.



Members of SLOBs building raised walkways at Watson-Symington Preserve.

Service League of Boys (SLOBs)

The New Canaan High School Service League of Boys (SLOBs) is a club for boys and their parents. It works with community organizations in town on projects that foster community responsibility and leadership, and strengthen son-parent relationships. SLOBs is the largest service club at NCHS and works with over 30 philanthropic organizations on over 70 different projects each year. During the 2021-2022 school year, SLOBs prepared soils for planting and removed invasive plants, with anywhere from 10-25 SLOB volunteers attending. We are very grateful for their assistance and look forward to welcoming them back for future projects.

Eagle Scout Projects

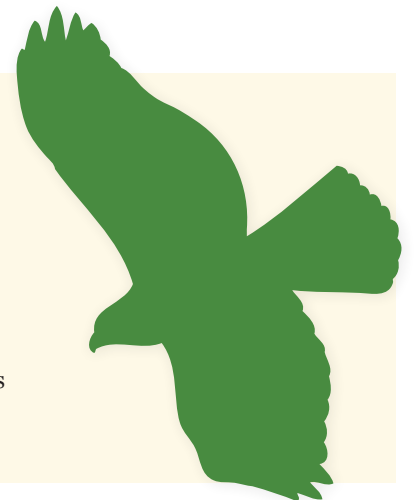
Since 2013 the land trust has welcomed Eagle Scouts to do service projects at our nature preserves. Service to others is an integral part of the scouting experience. Each year tens of thousands of

young men strive to achieve this coveted Eagle Scout rank. One of the rank requirements is to plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project that is helpful to the community. Through this requirement, Scouts practice what they have learned and gain valuable project management and leadership experience. In 2021-2022, we worked with two Eagle Scouts. Philip Ettinger created a brush pile habitat from invasive plant cuttings at the GreenLink-Oenoke Lane Trail. Nick Megdanis built and installed a kiosk and water diversion bars at Livingston-Higley Preserve. Both successfully completed their projects and achieved Eagle Scout rank. Congratulations, Philip and Nick!



Protect Your Land With Us

Do you own undeveloped land in New Canaan? Would you like to see it remain as open space and habitat for the many plants and animals with which we share our community? Whether by donation, sale, bargain sale, or via conservation easement, you can leave a lasting legacy by conserving your land in perpetuity. To learn more about how the Land Trust can help you achieve your conservation vision, please call us at 203-972-1270 or write to info@newcanaanlandtrust.org. We will gladly review the land conservation tools available to you and describe the financial benefits of land conservation.



2022 Sculpture Trail - Celebrating Open Space for Everyone

The 2022 New Canaan Sculpture Trail is a collaborative outdoor art exhibition between the Land Trust and the Carriage Barn Arts Center and was designed to inspire reflections about our natural surroundings through art and nature. The 2022 theme, Open Space for Everyone, encourages conversation about inclusion and equity.

Opened just at the end of our 2021-2022 fiscal year, the Sculpture Trail features ten sculptures at four Land Trust nature preserves, Town Hall, and the Carriage Barns Arts Center. The selected works represent a diverse range of sculptures and artists – from the 12-foot *'Titanosaurus'* standing tall in the Dinosaur Swamp on the GreenLink Trail near the New Canaan Nature Center to *Chaos and Calm*, comprised of 365 porcelain flowers on the GreenLink-Oenoke Trail to *Brickhead-Truth* outside the Carriage Barn Arts Center – plus seven others. The exhibition ran from June to the end of October.



Titanosaurus with artist Carlos Davila at GreenLink-New Canaan Nature Center. Photo by Laney Lloyd



Chaos and Calm sculpture with artist Simone Kestelman at GreenLink-Oenoke Lane. Photo by Laney Lloyd



Brickhead-Truth with artist James Tyler at Carriage Barn Arts Center. Photo by Laney Lloyd



Snowshoe Outing at Still Pond Preserve.



Butterfly Walk at Livingston-Higley Preserve.
Photo by Beth Sanford

Enjoying Nature: Hikes and Outings

Getting people outdoors to enjoy nature is a crucial part of our work. We offer hikes, outings, volunteer workdays, and many other fun events. To learn more about our programs, visit www.newcanaanlandtrust.org/events and subscribe to our monthly e-Newsletter.

Here's some photos of events from the past year.

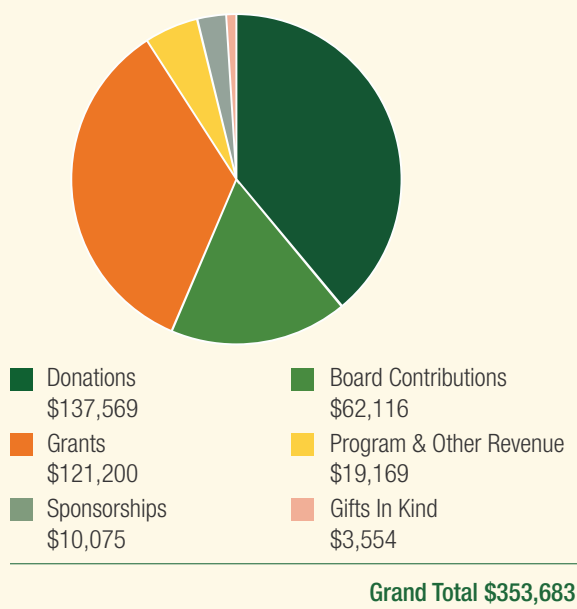


Walking the labyrinth at Watson-Symington Preserve. Photo by Laney Lloyd

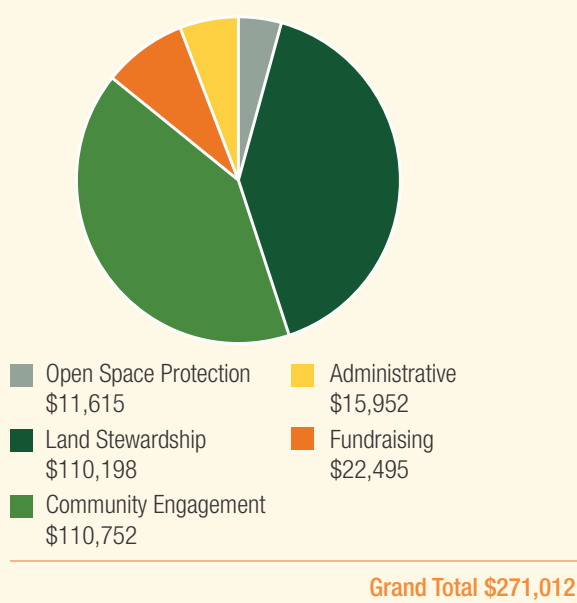


Planting the meadow at Still Pond Preserve. Photo by Laney Lloyd

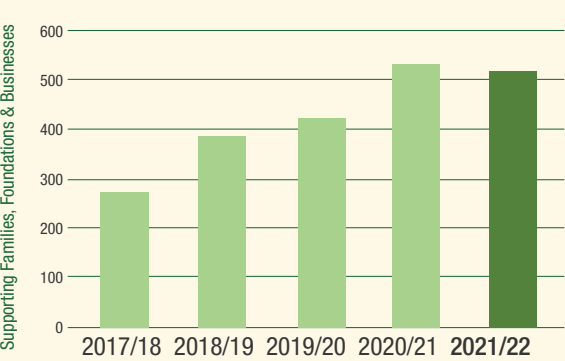
Fiscal Year 2022 Revenue



Fiscal Year 2022 Expenses



Support for Conservation



Financial statements presented in this report are unaudited and reflect operating revenue and expense for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2021 and ending May 31, 2022.

Copies of the Land Trust's most recent audited financial statements and Form 990 are available upon request by contacting the Land Trust at 203-972-1270 or emailing info@newcanaanlandtrust.org.



Your Support Makes Everything Possible...

Together we can continue protecting special places in New Canaan, steward the lands we've already protected, and offer hikes and outings to get people into nature. Here's how you make all this possible:

The Evergreen Society: An Opportunity to Leave a Lasting Legacy Through Planned Giving

The Evergreen Society consists of generous individuals and families who have named the New Canaan Land Trust as a beneficiary of a planned gift. Such gifts might include a direct bequest in your will, codicil enhancement to an existing will, gifts of land, appreciated securities, life insurance policies, and other creative options. Planned gifts of any amount qualify and membership is purely honorary. Evergreen Society members will be recognized annually and have premier access to special events and programming.

Contact us at 203-972-1270 to learn more. Imagine the impact you will have helping preserve land for future generations.

Volunteer at the Land Trust

As a land trust volunteer, your time, enthusiasm, and expertise, are valuable gifts to the community. You'll work side-by-side with other generous volunteers to build community while caring for New Canaan's special places. Projects include rebuilding historic stone walls, maintaining walking trails, removing invasive plants, and pitching in at our events, among many others. To learn more or to sign-up as a volunteer call us at 203-972-1270. Come join us!

Join a Land Trust Committee

If you really like what the Land Trust does and want to roll up your sleeves and help out we invite you to join one of our Board committees. These committees are composed of members of the Board of Directors and community members and are supported by land trust staff. Committees meet monthly or quarterly depending on the nature of the work. The list of committees includes Open Space (acquiring land for permanent protection); Land Stewardship (maintaining and improving our protected properties); Events (designing and implementing our hikes, outings, lectures, and educational events); and Development and Outreach (fundraising and community engagement). To learn more or to join a committee call us at 203-972-1270.



Livingston-Higley Preserve on a late afternoon in January. Photo by Laney Lloyd

Thank You for Making a Difference

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Lucy Dathan ★
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Steve Phillips and Jennifer Frazer ★

Donations reflect cumulative charitable gifts between June 1, 2021 and May 31, 2022. We apologize if we inadvertently misspelled or omitted your name, and hope that you will contact us so that we can correct our records.

Donated consecutively for ★ 2+ years ★ 5+ years ★ 10+ years

You Make It All Possible – Thank You!

Because of you and so many in our community we are able to conserve the special places that make New Canaan such a great place to live.

–Tom Cronin, Board President



Difference in Our Community

Stephanie Pineo
Larry and Mary Pitt ★
Jake and Jackie Powell
Lauren Prial
Dan and Stephanie Radman
Dan and Penny Rashin ★
Michael and Julie Reeves ★
Walter and Margy Reilly ★
Jennifer Richardson
Keith and Marina Richey ★
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New Canaan
Land Trust

P.O. Box 425
New Canaan, CT 06840

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Susan Bergen

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Cristen Cottrell

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You're Invited...

To the New Canaan Land Trust's 55th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

6:30 to 8:30 pm at The New Canaan Nature Center
144 Oenoke Ridge, New Canaan, CT 06840

The annual meeting is a great way to learn about the many ways you and your friends and neighbors have helped preserve open space and wildlife habitat through the New Canaan Land Trust.



The Land Trust accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

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Subscribe to the Land Trust's eNews for monthly updates, invitations to events, and more. Visit our website at www.newcanaanlandtrust.org to sign up.



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Brickhead-Truth sculpture by James Tyler at Carriage Barn Arts Center. Photo by Laney Lloyd

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